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ART. III. — THE WAR IN THE EAST.

PART II.

WE stated in a preceding paper* that the permanent army of the Caucasus, including the Cossacks of the Kuban, has long been understood to amount to nearly 170,000 men of all arms, and, with the supports available, it was reasonable to assume the capacity of the Russians to operate in Armenia with as many troops as the supplies and communications permitted, and that they would at every important point be superior in force to their antagonist. The result has not supported this assumption, but has shown either that the available Russian strength in the Caucasus has been vastly overrated, or that a very large portion of it was retained within their own territory to oppose the Turkish expeditions to Sugkhum-Kalé and other points on the coast, and to put down the insurrection of the native tribes, or that it has been unskillfully applied. On the 23d of April columns crossed the frontier from Poti, moving upon Batoum, from Alexandropol upon Kars, and from Erivan upon Bayazeth. The attempt to cut the communication from Batoum into the interior was immediately successful, and the subsequent attacks by the Russians at that point were probably intended to drive the Turks as close in upon the town as possible, so that their own position might be shortened and more men made available for other operations. On the left, Bayazeth was occupied on the 26th, and the Erivan column moved by Dijadin and Kara-Kilissa, in the direction of Toprakh-Kalé and Deli-Baba. The central column moved on Kars. Early in May another column moved from Akhaltzik upon Ardahan, and on the 17th of that month breached the works and carried the place by assault. The headquarters of the central column were now at Mazra, near Kars, which was invested, and a cavalry force thrown towards the Saganlugh. About the same time the left column reached Utsch-Kilissa, in the valley of the Murad Euphrates, with its advanced guard at Jeranos and Chamur, where a mountain road from Kagysman

* North American Review, July-August, 1877, p. 35.

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enters the valley, and nearly half-way from Bayazeth to Erzeroum. A detachment from this column had reached Arnis, on Lake Van, and hostile Kurds were collecting at Bitlis and Diarbekir.

The Turks still held Getchevan and Deli-Mussa. About the 26th, or a little earlier, Kars was being bombarded, and the Russian scouts had appeared near Olti, where the Turkish left was collecting. At the end of May the extreme right of the Russians was still in front of Batoum, while the right wing of the active army was in small force at Olti; the cavalry patrols of the centre had advanced to Vezinvaisin; the left was still at Utsch-Kilissa, with its advanced guard near Toprakh-Kalé.

The Turkish left was then in rear of Olti; the centre in the Saganlugh in a strong position near Zevin; the right in front of Deli-Baba, with its advanced guard at Toprakh-Kalé.

Early in June the advance of the Russian left induced Muktar Pasha to establish his headquarters at Kopri-Koi, on the Araxes, where the roads from Bayazeth and Kars unite; he left a strong force at Zevin to oppose any advance of the Russian centre; his right remained at Deli-Baba, and his left in rear of Nariman. About this time he received reinforcements stated to amount to twenty-four battalions.

Up to this time everything had gone well with the Russians, in spite of the delays resulting from bad weather, and snow in the passes and on the high plateaus, and it was generally announced that the Turkish commander was so much impressed with the folly of attempting to resist the concentric advance of his antagonist upon Erzeroum that he had determined to abandon the Saganlugh, Karatschli, and Kosch passes, and fall back upon Erzeroum as the only method of extricating his army and its material. But this announcement was premature; the Turk not only held his ground, but assumed the offensive, and the Russian, with success supposed to be fully within his grasp, soon lost most of what he had gained.

Muktar had learned that the Russian wings at Olti and in the valley of the Murad Euphrates were very weak, and as there was no appearance of an immediate attack by their centre, he determined to push forward both his wings. He therefore first reinforced his left, so that it consisted of eleven battalions, three regiments of cavalry, and six mountain guns, and ordered its advance upon Olti. The Russians, who do not seem to have had more than

three battalions and a small force of cavalry and artillery, which, it would now appear, were sent out merely as a reconnoissance, fell back without fighting beyond Nessipennek to the Kanly Mountains, where they do not appear to have been further molested. The Turks reoccupied Olti on the 7th of June.

On the 9th of June the Russian left occupied Zaidikhan, at the foot of the Kosch passes. Still more reassured by the retreat of the Russian right from Olti, Muktar now reinforced his own right at Deli-Baba to seventeen battalions, two field and one mountain battery, and some eight hundred cavalry, and ordered its advance upon the Russians at Zaidikhan. The Russians, who were decidedly inferior in the number of infantry, but superior in cavalry and artillery, did not await the attack, but on the 14th moved out of Zaidikhan to meet the Turks; the 15th was spent in manœuvring for position, and on the 16th the Russians attacked the Turks at Taghir, and completely routed them. The result was the occupation of the passes by the victors; but their numbers were too small to permit them to follow up their success. A few more battalions — certainly another division — would have enabled them to seize Koprî-Koi, and co-operate with the attack made upon Zevin by the centre a few days later.

Meanwhile serious events had taken place in rear of the Russian left column. A force coming from Lake Van had reoccupied the town of Bayazeth, and shut up the small Russian garrison in the citadel.

We have as yet no information in regard to the reasons which prevented the relief of Bayazeth by a fresh column from Erivan, nor can we yet form an opinion whether the victors of Taghir had commenced their preparations for marching to the relief of their besieged comrades before the occurrence we are about to relate. Upon receiving intelligence of the rout at Taghir, Muktar quickly assembled fresh troops to the amount of fourteen battalions, two field batteries, ten mountain guns, and twenty-five hundred cavalry, and with this force, brought up to nineteen battalions by the remnants from the battle of Taghir, advanced in person to attack the Russian left. The Russians had ten battalions, eight field-guns, some mountain guns and cavalry.

On the 21st the Turks attacked the Russian position with a good deal of persistency, but were repulsed with heavy loss. The

accounts from an English correspondent with the Turkish army make this very clear, and also that during the night the Russians fell back unmolested to Zaidikhan. From this point they continued their retreat, which does not seem to have been seriously interfered with, notwithstanding the Turkish official reports to the contrary.

Before proceeding to Bayazeth the retreating Russian left moved to Igdyr, a point within their own territory about thirty miles southwest of Erivan, and about eighteen miles northwest of Mount Ararat, where they promptly replenished their supplies, and at once moved towards Bayazeth. On the 12th of July the Turkish investing force, some thirteen thousand strong, was attacked and routed, so that the gallant little garrison was at once relieved. The Russians now retired undisturbed to Igdyr, where they have since remained, and it is now stated that they have been considerably reinforced. While these operations were in progress on the left, a division of the Russian centre, under Mellikoff, attacked the Turkish centre at Zevin-Dooz, on the 25th of June, four days after the final attack upon the left.

The position of Zevin-Dooz was very strong on the right and front, being covered in those directions by a very difficult ravine, which was swept by artillery fire, and whose sides were almost impassable by troops. The left flank was much more open, and afforded good cover for attacking troops. This was the weakest part of the position in regard to its natural condition, and the defensive arrangements of the Turks. The position is said to have been held by twenty-one battalions, with a small cavalry force and twelve guns. The Russians attacked with fifteen battalions and twenty-four guns. They appeared in front of the position during the morning of the 25th, and, without waiting to rest the men or reconnoitre the position, at once attacked the right, or strongest part. From the nature of the ground, the Russian artillery could produce very little effect, firing from a position below the Turkish guns. For the same reason their infantry fire did little harm, while they were fully exposed to the fire of the Turkish artillery and infantry, and, in addition, the ground over which they were to advance was so precipitous as to be almost impassable. Time after time the Russians renewed their fruitless assaults with the utmost gallantry, until about half past eight at night, when they

were withdrawn, after losing nearly a fourth of those engaged. They were not pursued, and gradually retreated to the vicinity of Kars, where they united with the besieging force. Muktar Pasha followed at a respectful distance, and opened his communication with the garrison of the besieged city on the 8th of July. Before his arrival the besieging army gradually drew back to their intrenched camp at Zaim, about eight miles northeast of Kars, where they remained long enough to cover the withdrawal of their siege material, and finally fell back, unpursued, to the heights of Kurukdere, about half-way to Alexandropol, where they awaited reinforcements.

On the 24th of June the Russians in front of Batoum were attacked. The Turks claim a victory. The Russians state that they completely repulsed the attack, but that, in consequence of the large reinforcements received by the Turks, they subsequently abandoned the position they had so long occupied. Whichever statement is true, the result was that the Russians withdrew from Batoum, and took up positions along the frontier between Fort St. Nicholas and Ozurgeti.

The net material results of this first series of operations in Armenia were the capture of Ardahan and the occupation of a strong position, within Turkish territory, in front of Alexandropol. It remains to be seen why a campaign commenced with such high hopes and brilliant prospects terminated in failure.

In the first place, it must be said that the Russian regimental officers and men of all arms evinced the greatest devotion, endurance, courage, and skill; so the fault does not lie with them. The first great error appears to have been that the plan of operations was too extended for the force employed.

We cannot as yet ascertain with absolute certainty the Russian strength in Armenia; but the best information available indicates that the infantry force in front of Batoum consisted of eight or ten battalions, probably nine; the Ardahan column seems to have had only nine battalions; the central or Kars column, from forty to forty-five; the left column, twelve battalions, of which two were left in garrison at Bayazeth, — making in all seventy-five battalions at most.

It is stated that the Turks had from thirty-four to thirty-six battalions in Batoum, twenty-nine in garrison in Kars, thirty

brought up by Muktar after the battle of Zevin-Dooz, seventeen who fought at Taghir, fourteen fresh battalions who took part in the affair of Zaidikhan on the 21st of June, at least four left near Olti, perhaps ten at Bayazeth; these would make one hundred and thirty-nine battalions, and with the reserves at Erzeroum, guarding communications, it would amount to at least one hundred and fifty battalions, or double the number of the Russian battalions. Omitting the large number practically useless at Batoum, the preponderance was still largely against the Russians, as one hundred and fifteen to sixty-five. The Turkish battalions may have been weaker, but the Russians were at every point outnumbered by troops in intrenched positions, except at Kars, and there, also, when the detachment under Mellikoff had moved to Zevin.

With the force actually at the disposal of the Russians the only chance of success, under the plan of operations adopted, was to leave the smallest possible number of troops to invest Kars, and push all their columns forward with the greatest rapidity, but with entire co-ordination, upon Erzeroum before the Turks could receive reinforcements and complete their preparations for defence. Under such circumstances it is probable that success might have crowned their efforts.

But to carry out the actual plan so as to insure success under all probable contingencies, it would appear that at least one hundred and twenty battalions would be necessary. This would have given a full division of twelve battalions in front of Batoum; a full division for the active column from Ardahan to Olti; a brigade for the garrison of Bayazeth, and three brigades for Tergukassoff's active column on the left, and an active column of from two and a half to three divisions in the centre. With such forces the campaign ought to have been entirely successful, especially if the active columns had advanced promptly and made the attack on Olti, Zevin, and Deli-Baba simultaneously. With the troops actually in hand, the probabilities are that they would have accomplished more satisfactory results by remaining entirely on the defensive in the direction from Erivan to Bayazeth, and concentrating the greatest possible force around Kars to push and cover the siege. It was well to mask Batoum and capture Ardahan in any event. A substantial repetition of Paskévitch's campaign of

1828 would have been well suited to the actual condition of affairs.

We are as yet entirely ignorant of so many circumstances which influenced the Russian commanders that it is very difficult to pass judgment upon their actions, but from what we now know certain general conclusions may be reached, subject to revision when fuller information reaches us. Considering the disparity of forces represented as existing at Batoum, the Russian commander in front of that place did his work admirably, and neutralized nearly four times his own strength. The commander of the Ardahan column evinced great energy and skill in the prompt capture of that place, and there is no reason to believe that he could have accomplished more than he afterwards did with the small force at his disposal.

General Tergukassoff, on the left, displayed very high qualities; he fought the battle of Taghir with great skill and energy, and there seems to be nothing to criticise in his movements. His force was too small to enable him to follow up his victory, and his retreat after the affair of the 21st was no doubt rendered necessary by the threatening attitude of the Turks at Bayazeth, who held his communications, and by the absence of any hope of effective co-operation by the central column. It remains to be explained why those charged with the supreme direction of the campaign left so important a point as Bayazeth so weakly guarded, and why a fresh column was not immediately sent to its relief from Erivan, thus enabling Tergukassoff to hold his own at Deli-Baba.

General Melikoff's attack upon Zevin seems to have been ill-timed and very badly conducted; it was too late to aid Tergukassoff, but would probably have succeeded if well managed.

The probability is that the advance of this column was delayed by the necessity of fortifying positions around Kars to enable a small force to oppose sorties of the garrison and keep them hemmed in. If Melikoff's attack had been successfully made a few days earlier, the result of the campaign would have been very different; but under all the circumstances, as now known to us, the advance of this column was ill-advised as committing too much to chance. It would have been better to hold it intact for covering the siege.

We cannot close this branch of our subject without calling attention to the immense advantage the Turks enjoyed in the

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naval control of the Black Sea. This enabled them to land troops at Sugkhum-Kalé, to stir up insurrections in the Caucasus, to hold Batoum, and to send supplies and reinforcements into Armenia by way of Trebizond. On the other hand, the Russians were obliged to divert large forces to act against the insurgents, to watch Sugkhum-Kalé and other points on the coast, and to mask Batoum; it also obliged them to use a long land-route for supplies.

Had the Russians possessed the naval control of the Black Sea, their successes in Armenia would have been prompt and complete.

Many months ago, while negotiations were pending for the solution of the vexed question of the East, Russia, in order to be prepared for any eventuality, quietly commenced the concentration of troops and supplies in Bessarabia, the province adjacent to the Danubian Principalities. The point chosen for the headquarters was Kischenev, on the railroad leading from Jassy in Moldavia to the Odessa Railway, and thus connected with the entire system of Russian railroads. Here the work of concentration and preparation was unremittingly urged, until the fruitlessness of negotiations was universally admitted, and the season for operations approached. War was formally declared on the 24th of April, and on the preceding day the advanced guards crossed the frontier into Roumania.

By a rapid and well-conducted march of about forty miles in thirty-six hours, the advanced guard of the fourteenth corps occupied Galatz and Brailov, and secured possession of the very important railroad bridge over the Sereth at Barboschi, between the last-named cities, while the rest of the army proceeded to the occupation of the Principalities.

To form an idea of the magnitude of this work, it must be remembered that the distance from the point of crossing the frontier near Kischenev to Bucharest is more than three hundred and thirty miles by the circuitous railway, and more than two hundred and fifty by the common roads. From Bucharest to Sistova is about sixty-five miles, and to Kalafat nearly two hundred miles; while, following the roads along the northern bank of the Danube, it is more than four hundred miles from Kalafat to Isatchki, where the Russians first crossed in 1828. The first task of the Russians was the solid occupation of the Principalities and the left bank of the Danube, the accumulation of men, material, and supplies,

the isolation or destruction of the Turkish gunboats in the river, by means of batteries and torpedoes, and the preparation of means for crossing the river. In the campaigns of Wittgenstein and Diebitsch, and at the commencement of the Crimean War, before the Allies intervened, the Russians enjoyed the great advantage of the control of the Black Sea, which simplified the question of reinforcement and supplies, and made it advantageous to rest their left on the Black Sea during the advance to and beyond the Balkans.

At present the Turkish fleet commands the Euxine, which forces the Russians to adopt an interior line of communication. As there is only one railway from Bessarabia into the Principalities, and because for many weeks after the first advance the rains and floods rendered the common roads wellnigh impassable, the work of accumulation and preparation was difficult in the extreme, and required much time. On the other hand, the waters of the Danube were long so high that a crossing could not be effected, so that the time spent in waiting for the supplies required for an advance in force was by no means wasted.

Thus far the Russians have succeeded admirably in concealing their strength. Eight army corps have been mentioned by their distinguishing numbers as being on the Danube, and statements have been made that there are eleven corps on and near the Danube, with others *en route*. The number of the troops have been variously given as from 270,000 to more than 400,000 men.

It appears that the organization of the army corps in the field is two divisions of infantry and one of cavalry, with the corresponding artillery; some corps, as, for example, the sixth, have three divisions of infantry. The rifle brigades, of which there are eight in the whole army, each of four battalions, are probably not permanently assigned to any corps, but act with those having most need of their services; for example, in the recent movement of General Gourkha across the Balkans, he was accompanied by at least one of these rifle brigades, and it may prove to be the case that his force consisted chiefly of these troops and cavalry.

It is clear, from all the accounts that reach us, that the Russian force in the field is large; the nature and extent of their movements would prove this to be the case, were it not that the insufficiency of the forces with which the Armenian campaign was

undertaken would justify us in suggesting the possibility, but not the probability, of a similar mistake on the Danube.

We shall probably be safe in estimating the Russian force in the European field of war at eleven army corps, which, with the rifle brigades, reserve artillery and cavalry, engineer troops, etc., would give something like 325,000 effective combatants, in addition to the Roumanian army, and such troops as may be procured for police duty, etc., from among the inhabitants of Bulgaria. To what extent these troops can be reinforced depends upon questions of communication and supplies, — really the most difficult part of the Russian task.

About the middle of June the waters of the Danube had fallen so much as to indicate that the crossing would soon be practicable, while the preparations for an advance were nearly complete. On the 20th of June the crossing commenced at Galatz, where ten companies of infantry crossed in boats, and gallantly attacked the heights in rear, held by troops of all arms; they carried the position, and held it until reinforced on the return of the boats.

As soon as the crossing at Galatz was successfully accomplished, a bridge was built at Brailov, and the troops poured rapidly into the Dobrudscha. On the 25th some 18,000 crossed at Hirsova, and effected their junction with those who had crossed below. As far as can be ascertained the sixth and fourteenth corps, five divisions of infantry, were engaged in the movement, and numbered at least 60,000 men. Matchin and the other fortified towns of the Upper Dobrudscha promptly fell into their hands, and it is to be assumed that steps were taken at once to perfect and secure the means of crossing the river, to bring up ample supplies for further movements, and to clear the banks of the Danube as far up as Silistria, and the shores of the Euxine north of Varna.

The foothold in the Dobrudscha, the cannonading of Rustchuk, Nikopoli, and other fortresses, and feints at various points so completely distracted the attention of the Turks that the passage of the Danube was forced at Simnitza early in the morning of the 27th of June.

A day or two previously four pontoon trains, of fifty-two boats each, were quietly collected in Simnitza. The eighth corps, under General Ravetsky, had the honor of leading the way in this very

delicate and dangerous undertaking. General Dragomiroff's division, the fourteenth, was the first to cross. During the night of the 25th Dragomiroff's division reached Simnitza, and remained concealed therein, while bridges were built over two narrow arms of the river separating the northern shore from a wide mud-flat which borders the main stream.

At dark on the evening of the 26th the pontoons and troops moved out of Simnitza; the guns were placed in position among the willows lining the river-bank, and the preparations completed as rapidly as possible. At one o'clock on the morning of the 27th the whole of the fifty-third regiment, twelve companies, with eight mountain guns, entered the boats and started for the Bulgarian shore. If our memory serves us, the fifty-third is the regiment of Volkynia, which in the Crimean War so acquitted itself in the memorable defence of Sebastopol as to gain a reputation akin to that of the fifty-seventh French regiment in the army of the First Empire, which was known as "*Le Terrible*," and bore upon its colors the proud motto, "*Un contre dix*." If we are correct in this, the fifty-third was well selected to lead the main army of Russia in its advance across the Danube, and, knowing how much of the glory of the past, success in the present, and hope for the future rested upon its valor, it nobly performed the momentous duty devolved upon it.

When the boats were about half-way over the Turks discovered the movement, and at once opened a heavy fire, which did not for a moment check the advance of the fifty-third. From the force of the current the line of boats became somewhat disarranged, and reached the shore at unequal intervals.

The river-bank at this point is very steep and difficult to climb, and the ground rises in a succession of terraces, each offering a strong position for defence. Any of our readers who participated in the landing of Worth's division at Vera Cruz will well remember how officers and men, without waiting for the boats to touch the shore, eagerly leaped into the water and rushed to the first line of sand-hills, behind which they expected to find the enemy. So in this case the Russians sprang from the boats, climbed the first bluff with great difficulty, and at once came into action; for the Turks, supine as they are, were more on the alert than the Mexicans. The boats returned at once for more troops, and continued constantly

plying across the river. As more men landed, the Russians continually gained ground, and steadily advanced, gradually enlarging the area in their possession. Up to eight o'clock they fought in groups, as they happened to come together; about that hour companies and battalions were formed, and after that all went on regularly. It is stated that the Turks had at least 6,000 infantry at hand soon after the crossing commenced, and at least one battery and a half. About one o'clock in the afternoon the Russian field-guns began to cross, and by two o'clock the Turks were driven out of Sistova and beyond the commanding heights, so that the crossing was fully secured. The boats steadily continued their work, and so successfully that when evening came all the infantry of the eighth corps and the fourth rifle brigade were firmly established on the Bulgarian bank, and the thirty-fifth division of the thirteenth corps was in the act of crossing.

The Russian arrangements were admirable, for the Turks were completely deceived, and this most delicate operation was accomplished with a loss of less than a thousand officers and men in killed, drowned, and wounded. While the passage of troops in boats continued, the construction of a bridge was begun on the 28th, and, notwithstanding the interruption caused by a storm, was completed on the 2d of July, when the cavalry, artillery, and trains commenced pouring over. By the 3d of July the Russian outposts extended some eighteen or twenty miles from the river, with cavalry patrols pushed still farther south. The time had thus passed when the Turks could hope to prevent the further crossing of the Russians; their only chance was on the 27th and 28th, when, if their troops had been properly posted, they might have crushed those who first crossed before artillery and reinforcements could be brought over to support them. The attempt to prevent a large army from passing a long river by posting a weak cordon of troops along its course must almost necessarily fail. All that can be done is to watch carefully, so that the first attempt to cross may be promptly discovered, and, having already posted the troops intended for the defence in strong bodies at convenient points in rear, march them rapidly to the crossing-place, and at once attack those already over before they can be fully supported. The chief danger and difficulty in crossing a large river is in the fact that all reinforcements and supplies must come by one or

two narrow bridges, which may at any time give way, and over which progress is slow at best; so that there always is in such cases the contingency that a portion of the crossing army may be completely separated from the rest and exposed, without the possibility of retreat, to the attack of the whole of the hostile army.

The Russians had thus carried out the second great object of the campaign; their left being over the Danube in the Dobrudscha, their right interposed between Widdin and Rustchuk. Between the right and left was the Quadrilateral; between both and Constantinople lay the Balkans. The preliminaries thus accomplished with marked success, the real and decisive work lay before them. So much has been said about "Quadrilaterals," that the term appears to be invested in the minds of many with some mysterious power, so that it may be well to devote a little space to this particular Quadrilateral, that our readers may be able to form some opinion as to what it will do for the Turks.

It is an irregular figure, at whose angles are the fortresses of Rustchuk, Silistria, Varna, and Shumla. The northern side is formed by the Danube, whose course from Rustchuk to Silistria is about seventy miles; the eastern side is an imaginary line, about fifty miles long, from Silistria to Varna; the river Devna may be taken as the south side, and it is about fifty miles from Varna to Shumla; the railway from near Shumla to Rustchuk may be considered as the western side, and is about sixty-two miles long. The ordinary and natural line of supply of these fortresses is through Varna and by the Black Sea. A railway extends from Varna to Rustchuk, passing through Pravadi and Rasgrad, and near Jenibasar; from the vicinity of the latter place a short branch of about twelve miles leads to Shumla.

At the present juncture it may be of interest to give a little more detailed information in relation to the four fortresses.

Rustchuk has some sixty thousand inhabitants, and is the seat of a very considerable commerce; it is dirty, and badly built. It is in the obtuse angle formed by the Lom and the Danube, and is commanded by high ground in the rear; but this difficulty has been met by the construction of a line of advanced earth redoubts, which must be carried before the town can be assaulted. Unless very great changes have been made quite recently, the most advanced and important of these, from its situation, is the Dajdsler Fort, which is on the left bank of the Lom, about four

thousand yards from the town, and takes in reverse the approaches to the other redoubts. This would naturally be the first point of attack in a regular siege, unless the attack were confined altogether to the extreme eastern portion of the line. To what extent the advanced works have been strengthened and increased of late we have no means of ascertaining; ample time has certainly been allowed to prepare for an obstinate defence, and the railway has afforded the means of supplying the place abundantly. As is the case with the other works of the Quadrilateral, the strength of the defence consists altogether in the advanced redoubts; their line once broken, the places will be at the mercy of the Russian artillery.

Silistria has some twenty thousand inhabitants, and is on the Danube, about eight miles above the mouth of the Tuban. It is on rather low ground, commanded by the heights in rear, which here also are occupied by advanced redoubts. The northern bank of the Danube is low and marshy, and just below the town are three marshy islands, — Salgan, Hoppo, and Prival, — which towards the close of the impending siege may be used by the Russians with advantage. Unless very great changes have been made during the last few months, the advanced redoubt known as the Arab Fort would naturally be the first point of attack.

Varna is a place of twenty-five thousand inhabitants, on a shallow open bay at the mouth of the Devna; the harbor is not very good. The permanent fortifications are not strong, and could be breached from a distance, were it not for the line of advanced redoubts.

Shumla has been sufficiently described in a preceding article; it has thirty thousand inhabitants. From the fact that the crossing at Simnitza and the subsequent advance to Tirnova were not seriously interfered with, and that the army of the Dobrudscha has been permitted to move upon Silistria without interference, it is to be inferred that the garrisons of Rustchuk and Silistria are only large enough to defend the works, and do not attain the magnitude of armies. The probabilities are that the mass of the Turkish forces in Bulgaria are at or near Plevna, Shumla, and Varna.

The fortresses at the angles of the Quadrilateral are of use as affording secure depots of supply for the active army, and points of support and retreat for it in the event of disaster. It is only in this regard, as facilitating and covering the movements of a large

active army in its vicinity, that such a Quadrilateral is of any especial importance. So far as the fortresses themselves are concerned, if left to themselves with merely the garrisons required for defence, they are of no especial value, and influence the ground only a little beyond the range of their guns.

For example, in this case, Rustchuk and Silistria would merely make a crossing of the river under their guns impossible, and compel the selection of other points less favorable so far as the ground is concerned. But a fortress near an enemy's line of march and communication must be watched, no matter how small the garrison; and the besieging or observing force should as a rule be superior in strength to the garrison, so that when the contending armies are nearly equal the necessity for besieging or watching several fortresses will reduce the available force of the party thus engaged below that of its antagonist.

When the attacking party is so superior in numbers that it can furnish the requisite besieging armies without losing its superiority in the field, the fortresses have lost much of their value, which to a great extent consists in neutralizing forces much superior to the garrisons.

Now, to prevent the garrisons of Rustchuk and Silistria from interfering with their communication across the Danube, the Russians must hem in and neutralize these garrisons; and the best and most effectual method of doing it is to blockade or besiege them.

If the forces of the combatants are so nearly equal that when the Russians are weakened by the necessary detachments, the Turks can attack them on the line of Jantra near Tirnova, with well-grounded hopes of success, then Shumla will be of great service to them as affording supplies for the movement, and a place of refuge in the event of disaster.

Varna would play the same part in relation to an attack upon Zimmerman's army in the Dobrudscha. If the Turks lost a battle near Silistria or Rustchuk, these fortresses would afford them places of shelter, but they would be hemmed in without the hope of relief unless from the successful advance of an entirely new army, while at Shumla or Varna they might be reinforced and refitted for another attempt.

Before the completion of the bridge at Simnitza on the 2d of July, considerable parties of cavalry must have crossed in boats, for on the 1st they appeared at Biela and on the 2d at Tirnova,

nearly forty miles south of the Danube. The first occupation of these places was only temporary, but on the 5th Biela was occupied by the head of General Gourkha's column, which was at once relieved by other troops, while the general moved on to Tirnova, which he occupied with dragoons, on the 7th driving out a considerable force of Turkish infantry and artillery; he was reinforced by infantry and artillery within a day or two. Meanwhile troops and supplies were constantly passing over the river, and massing in readiness for an advance. On the 2d July the army in the Dobrudscha had come in contact with the Turks along the line of the Kostendgi and Tschernavoda railway.

Kostendgi appears to have been occupied by the Russians on the 15th.

While Gourkha undertook the movements which will presently be described, a column moved from Sistova upon Nikopoli, and at once attacked it from the south, assisted by the batteries at Turna on the north bank. The result was, that after some hard fighting the place and the remains of its garrison,—some two thousand regulars and forty guns,—together with two gunboats, surrendered on the morning of the 16th. This success was of very great importance to the Russians, as giving them a second and excellent crossing of the middle Danube, and greatly facilitating their operation against the force moving down upon their right from the direction of Widdin and Plevna. Soon after the occupation of Tirnova the movement upon the Balkans commenced. The ninth division marched through Dranova upon Gabrova at the foot of the Shipka Pass, while General Gourkha, covered by this advance, turned off at Tirnova and moved to Elena, whence he made a reconnoissance to Osmanbasar in order to satisfy himself whether the Turkish left extended beyond that point, and covered the portion of the Balkans he intended to cross. After some fighting he ascertained that his projected route was clear, and drew off, leaving the Turks under the impression that they had repulsed a serious attack, for they did not suspect his real motive. Conducted by Bulgarian guides, he now moved rapidly towards the Hanskoi Pass, about midway between Slivno and the Shipka Pass. The Hanskoi seems to be one of the unused passes, known to few beyond the Bulgarian Christian refugees who for generations have made their homes in the midst of the fastnesses of the Balkans. No full and satisfactory accounts of the composition of Gourkha's force have reached us, but

it is known to have comprised one rifle brigade, probably the fourth, some Cossack infantry and cavalry, a Bulgarian legion, regular cavalry, and some artillery,—probably mountain guns. This force, which appears to have done all the fighting, may have been only the advanced guard of the command, but it probably constituted the whole column. On the 14th Gourkha seized the pass, and on the 15th his advanced guard was attacked near Kanaro, but repulsed the enemy and occupied the place. On the same day the Cossack cavalry moved down the Tundscha Valley, and at Jeni Saghra cut the railway and telegraph connecting Jamboli with the Adrianople Railway. On the 16th Gourkha marched towards Kassanlik, but on his way encountered Turkish troops of all arms in a strong position at Uplami. He promptly attacked and completely routed this force, inflicting heavy losses upon them. On the 17th he continued his march on Kassanlik, skirmishing all day, and occupied the place late in the afternoon, thus closing the southern outlet of the Shipka Pass, which was still held by the Turks. On the same day detachments from the ninth division attacked the pass from the north, and after very severe fighting carried the outer line of intrenchments, where they remained during the night. On the 18th Gourkha advanced into the pass from Kassanlik. The Turks now offered to surrender, but availed themselves of the time occupied in negotiating to escape during the night in a thoroughly disorganized condition. The Russians captured all their guns and material. Gourkha's movements were characterized by very great energy and skill, and he fully deserved the success which crowned his efforts. While these occurrences were in progress, a brigade of the ninth corps was sent against Plevna, held by a Turkish force, from the direction of Widdin. This brigade sustained a severe defeat, explained by the Russians as caused by lack of skill and caution on the part of the commander.

It would appear that when Baron Krudener, in command of the ninth corps, advanced upon Nikopoli, he neglected to occupy, with his cavalry, Plevna, which controls the important line of the river Wid, and which ought to have been promptly secured. In order to retrieve this error he despatched three regiments of infantry, which, after severe fighting, gained possession of the town; thinking that their work was done, the men were permitted to throw aside their accoutrements for rest, when suddenly a very heavy fire was opened upon them from all sides, and before they could recover

their formation they were driven out with heavy loss. A strong Turkish column from Widdin, which had arrived too late to throw itself into Nikopoli, had taken possession of Plevna, and inflicted this disaster upon the Russians. Smarting under this check, and aware of the importance of preventing the accumulation of a heavy force in a strong position on his right flank, the Russian commander-in-chief took steps to gain possession of Plevna; but, underrating the strength of the enemy, his preparations were not in accordance with the magnitude of the task, and consequently failed entirely.

The vital necessity of driving the Turks from Plevna was apparent, and the opportunity of striking a heavy blow should have been welcomed by the Russian; but he should have concentrated every available man for the operation, so as to make the result certain and complete, that he might dispose of the force on his right flank once and forever. By drawing in his left temporarily to the line of the Lom, or even that of the Jantra, it would seem to have been in his power to concentrate at least four corps upon Plevna, while the possession of Nikopoli rendered it possible to turn the line of the Wid.

Instead of doing this, and not even bringing up the Roumanian troops to aid in the attack, the Grand Duke assigned to the task the ninth corps, much weakened by the affairs of Nikopoli and Plevna, aided by the thirtieth division and one brigade of the thirty-second division; a force of six brigades in all. The conduct of the operation was assigned to General Krudener. The Turkish position extended over the hills around Plevna, was strongly intrenched, and held by about 50,000 men with ample artillery. The attacking force numbered not more than 32,000 infantry, three brigades of cavalry, and some 160 guns. The attack was made on the 31st.

On the Russian right was General Krudener with the thirty-first division, supported by three regiments of the fifth division. On the left General Schackoskoy, with a brigade of the thirtieth division and one of the thirty-second, supported by a brigade of the thirtieth division in reserve. A brigade of cavalry and a battalion of infantry belonging to one of the three brigades covered Schackoskoy's left, and a similar force covered Krudener's right.

Krudener seems to have maintained an artillery combat all day, which made no impression on the Turkish line, and made no attack with his infantry. Schackoskoy moved from his bivouac about six in the morning and soon became engaged. Under cover of a hot

artillery fire his infantry carried a village in front of the first line of Turkish intrenchments. The Russian guns soon silenced and drove off the Turkish batteries on a ridge in rear of this village, and then crossed the valley and occupied the vacated ridge; the infantry in support behind the hill. Krudener having made no progress, Schackoskoy now determined to bring his infantry into action. At half past ten he ordered the advance, which was covered by the artillery; under a very severe fire the gallant infantry advanced, and finally entered the first line of the intrenchments, where the Turks as gallantly met them, but were pretty thoroughly exterminated in the hand-to-hand conflict which ensued. Without pausing the Russians advanced against the second and much stronger line; the fire was very heavy until they made their last rush, which the Turks did not wait to meet, but fled in disorder. So far all had gone well, and had the Russian general been content to hold what he had gained the subsequent disaster would have been avoided; for with his reserve brigade, which had not yet been brought into action, he might have held this position until reinforcements reached him. But, dazzled by the success which had thus far attended his bold movements, he now became rash, and ordered an advance upon the last and still stronger position of the Turks, held by largely superior numbers. The attack was made, but before reaching the goal the overtaken and exhausted troops hesitated, whereupon he threw his reserve into action and carried the works. But his men were now thoroughly worn out, and had suffered most severely; moreover, he had not a fresh man in reserve.

The Turks, finding that Krudener's infantry did not attack, now advanced large masses of fresh troops from their left, who drove out the exhausted Russians, and by nightfall they were in full retreat, a disorganized mass. A fresh division, perhaps even a fresh brigade, would have saved the day, but it was not at hand, for Krudener did nothing to support Schackoskoy. The remnants of Schackoskoy's command fell back upon the Osma, on which Krudener also took position. If the accounts which have reached us be correct, nothing could exceed the courage and devotion of the Russian troops; the disastrous result was due entirely to the fact that the attack was made with entirely insufficient forces, and the responsibility rests partly with Schackoskoy, who should have halted when he carried the second line of defence, partly upon

Krudener, who did nothing to support him, but chiefly with the commander-in-chief, who failed to provide means adequate to the end to be achieved. This battle, then, reflects great glory upon the troops, but discredit upon those responsible for the general movements of the campaign.

The Turks fought well, and should receive much praise for their conduct in the affair. The Russian loss at Plevna is officially stated as less than five thousand; that of the Turks was also heavy. Unless, as proved to be the case in Armenia, the Russian force is much less than is generally believed, the battle of Plevna cannot be regarded as a fatal disaster; it is doubtless a serious check, but should be repaired in a few days if the Russians have anything like the available force represented to be on the European field of war. They can still do what was in their power before the last battle, that is, draw in their left to the Lom or the Jantra, hold the southern outlets of the Shipka and Hanskoi passes, and throw all their available troops upon the front of the Turkish army at Plevna, while their reserves move from Nikopoli and turn the line of the Wid. There seems to be no good reason why the disaster of Plevna should not be more than compensated by the complete destruction of Osman Pasha's army.

According to the last advices, Osman Pasha had occupied Selvi, Suleiman Pasha was in front of or in possession of Kissanlik, Mehemet Ali was advancing from Shumla towards Tirnova, reinforcements were being pushed up from Constantinople to Adrianople, and considerable bodies were being brought from Batoum and its vicinity to Varna. On the other hand, we hear that the Russian Imperial Guard has been ordered to the Danube, and a division ordered up from each corps not yet mobilized,—the latter partly to the Caucasus and partly to the Danube. The two corps which were charged with the siege of Rustchuk under the Czarowitch, have been drawn in. Gourkha is strongly intrenched in the Shipka Pass. It is also stated that Krudener and Schackoskoy remain within six miles of Plevna, and are so strongly reinforced as to defy attack. If, as we suppose, the first object of the Russians is to concentrate upon and crush Osman Pasha, the advance of a portion of his force to Selvi will facilitate their purpose, and we may soon expect to hear that Osman Pasha has at least been driven from the chess-board. We have no news from Zimmerman in the Dobrudscha; if affairs are very grave near Tirnova he can be

brought by the north bank of the Danube to that point; if his presence is not needed there, he will hold in check the reinforcements sent to Varna until a decision is reached on the right, and can, from his present position, seriously interfere with the movements of Mehemet Ali towards Tirnova.

From Armenia it is stated that the last Turkish troops had been withdrawn from the shores of the Caucasus, and a large part of the garrison of Batoum removed, while we learn that the Russian Ardahan column has been strongly reinforced, so that it has advanced its outposts to Nessipennek, less than twenty miles from Olti; that a division has moved to Ardanusch, destined for the valley of the Tscorokh near Artwin, thus cutting the road from Batoum to Olti; that another column has appeared in the valley of the Adjara south of Batoum; that the centre has been reinforced up to sixty-eight battalions, sixteen batteries, and eight thousand cavalry; and that Tergukassoff has been reinforced to eighteen battalions, seven regiments of cavalry, and seven batteries. It is also stated that the Russian centre has resumed the offensive in front of Kars, and that Tergukassoff, having abandoned his old line of the Murad Euphrates, has moved from Igdyr into the valley of the Araxes south of Kars, although the latter statement is contradicted. If this information is founded upon fact, and is not greatly exaggerated, there is yet time for the Russians to redeem their errors before the close of the season. Their new combinations are much better than the old, and should result in forcing Muktar back to the Saganlugh in great haste. If the Ardanusch and Pennek columns are of respectable strength, he cannot hold his ground in the Saganlugh, with both flanks and his front threatened, but will be fortunate if he reaches Erzeroum in safety, leaving Kars to its fate.

GEO. B. McCLELLAN.

AUGUST 7.

P. S. — Since the preceding pages went to press there has been no marked change in the situation.

In the direction of Plevna no serious attempts have been made on either side; both parties are apparently preparing for a decisive struggle. The area occupied by the Russian army — from Plevna

towards Osmanbazar, from Sistova to Gabrova — is not so large as to require many days for concentration upon any given point. It is now nearly two weeks since the last attack upon Plevna took place, — far more than enough to effect any required concentration of the troops south of the Danube, — so that it is reasonable to suppose that other important considerations have delayed the resumption of the offensive by the Russians, while the quiescent attitude of the Turks indicates that they suffered severely at Plevna, and find the Russians so formidable that they prefer remaining on the defensive, for the present at least. It is probable that the Russians are bringing up all their available reserves, and that they find delay and difficulty in collecting the supplies necessary to enable them to follow up promptly a successful offensive movement. It now seems probable that the Russian force south of the Danube is not so large as was supposed; for if they really had anything like 300,000 men in Bulgaria, it is difficult to understand why they attacked Plevna with so weak a force, and why they have left the repulse so long unavenged.

It is unfortunate for the Russians that they deferred bringing matters to a crisis north of the Balkans before the army of Suleiman Pasha was withdrawn from Montenegro, and reinforcements were brought from Batoum and other points. It was so clearly their interest to do this that we must assume that the difficulties of transportation necessarily retarded their movements, and prevented the concentration of sufficient forces to accomplish promptly the ends in view.

The Russians cannot remain much longer in their present position, but must either fall back ignominiously upon the Danube, or open the way to an advance by crushing the armies on their flanks; every day's delay renders the task more difficult and their losses more severe. There is not yet anything definite from Zimmerman's command, and we cannot determine whether he is producing more useful results in favor of the main army than if operating on the Sistova line. The question of supplying a large army is always difficult, but trebly so where the lines of communication are so long and unsatisfactory as those of the Russians, so that we should be more fully informed in regard to the actual condition of affairs before venturing to attribute lack of ability or energy to the commander of the Russian army. We may, however, at least

surmise that Diebitsch or Paskévitch could ere this have found means to attain more satisfactory results. From Armenia the more recent intelligence does not fully bear out the statements made at the time the body of this article was closed. That the Russians have received reinforcements appears to be true; but their extent remains uncertain, and it is difficult to believe that they can have been as large as at first stated, for in that case they would have assumed the offensive at once, while it now appears that it is the Turks who have attacked, and that unsuccessfully. We have already alluded to the difficulty of bringing up supplies in that region, and it may well be that this accounts for the delay of the Russians in attacking. It is impossible to criticise with justice the operations of a campaign, or to forecast its results, until in possession of certain definite data which are absolutely indispensable for the formation of a correct opinion; for example, it is necessary to know, not only the topography of the seat of war, but the actual strength of the forces of both belligerents, and their condition as to discipline, arms, and moral qualities, also the extent of their available supplies and means of transportation, together with information upon other points which will determine what is possible as well as what is best to be accomplished. Distant as we are from the seat of war, scanty and imperfect as is the information at our command, we are groping very much in the dark, and are obliged to base conjectures upon mere probabilities. So, also, in regard to accomplished facts, we have thus far to go upon the briefest possible official reports, and the statements of newspaper correspondents, who, although often very energetic and intelligent men, cannot possibly know the whole state of the case.

As the more important operations of the war develop themselves, the horizon will clear, and we shall be able not only to form a reasonably correct opinion as to the actual resources of the combatants, but, what is more important, of the capacity and peculiarities of the commanders, so that it will then be comparatively easy to forecast the future in the light of accomplished facts, and be able to divine what a particular commander will be apt to do with known resources and under given circumstances.

With the imperfect light as yet shed upon the subject, it would appear—from the operation relating to the crossing of the Danube and the Balkans—that the Russian commander is cautious in

preparation, but prompt to act when ready. The affair of Plevna shows that he underrated the strength and power of resistance of his enemy. The delay since that battle would indicate that, impressed by the lesson so rudely taught, he is again engaged in careful preparation, and that when he strikes again, the blow will be a hard one, and difficult to parry. The ex-Turkish commander-in-chief showed a lack of energy, foresight, and definite purpose.

Osman Pasha proved that he understood his work, and did it well. The new commanding general of the Turks has not yet given us the means of forming an opinion as to his capacity. After the delay that has occurred, we have no means of judging whether the first blow of the Russians will be delivered on his right or left flank; now that he has in front of Plevna a force intrenched and in sufficient strength to hold Osman Pasha in check, it may well be that the circumstances of the case will induce the Grand Duke to make his first attack in the direction of Shumla, when a decided victory would produce far more decisive results than in the vicinity of Plevna. He will make a mistake if he attacks on both flanks simultaneously, unless his superiority of force is so great as to leave no chance of failure; his proper policy would be to remain strictly on the defensive on the least important flank, while he concentrates every available battalion to insure complete success in his attack on the other, and then, the moment this is disposed of, turn rapidly upon the other, and crush it in turn.

The political aspect of the war remains essentially the same. There is no immediate probability that either Austria or Servia will take part in hostilities; Montenegro for a long time gave full employment to considerable masses of Turkish troops, and when these were withdrawn to meet more pressing demands near the Balkans, emerged from the contest rudely shaken indeed, but still uncrushed, and with the power of giving serious annoyance to the Turks. From Greece the indications are continually more warlike, and the chances are that the natural desire, on the part of the people, for an increase of territory sufficient to include the most purely Greek province adjacent to the little kingdom, so as to give it effective strength, will force the government to declare war, and take part in the contest.

This action may be deferred until an important battle is fought south of the Danube, and may be abandoned should the Russians

encounter disaster, but will almost certainly follow an important Russian victory.

The insurrections in the Caucasus appear to be virtually suppressed, and have produced no other effect of consequence than the temporary withdrawal of troops from the active army to suppress them.

The probability of a general European war appears to be materially diminished, for the present at least, and is likely to increase only in the event of such sweeping successes on the part of the Russians as to place Turkey completely at their mercy, and tempt them to retain permanent possession of Constantinople.

In that event the danger would become serious.

On the whole, the Russians have lost some valuable time, they have gained some brilliant successes, and met with some severe checks ; but they have shown admirable fighting qualities, and the chances of ultimate success are still largely in their favor.

AUGUST 14.